IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 37-40.

Please amend Claims 1, 16, 18, 20, 26, 41, 43-44, and 47 as set forth in the following listing of claims, which will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

1.   (Currently amended) A method for exchanging information within a group of users on a wide area network, comprising the steps of:

receiving posts of information from said users on a wide area network;

storing said posts in a memory;

providing said users an option to receive said posts;

providing said users an option to rate each of said posts in relation to a defined topic;

receiving rating data pertaining to selected ones of said posts from said users, wherein at least a portion of said rating data comprises a quantitative rating ratings of comparative relevance of said selected ones of said posts to said defined topic, said ratings determined by said users after reviewing said selected ones of said posts, and wherein said selected ones of said posts comprises posts that have been received and individually rated by said users;

storing said rating data in said memory; and

providing said users an option to receive said rating data defining comparative relevance values associated with said selected ones of said posts equally for said users.

2.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising providing on a wide area network a Web page displaying at least one of said posts, and providing said users an option to contribute at least one of said posts using said Web page.

3.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said first providing step further comprises providing a Web page on a wide area network, said Web page having a toggle object providing users an option of displaying at least a portion of said posts grouped according to a subject thread, and not grouped according to a subject thread.

4.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said second providing step further comprises providing a Web page on a wide area network, said Web page having a vote object providing users said option to rate said posts.

5.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said second providing step further comprises providing said users said option to rate each of said posts according to at least one predetermined criteria.

6.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said second providing step further comprises providing said users said option to rate each of said posts according to whether said each of said posts comprises a flame.

7.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said second providing step further comprises providing said users said option to rate each of said posts according to whether said each of said posts comprises spam.

8.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising aggregating said rating data recorded in said memory for each post in said selected ones of said posts.

9.   (Original) The method according to Claim 8, wherein said aggregating step further comprises developing an aggregate post score based on said rating data for each post in said selected ones of said posts according to at least one predetermined criteria.

10.   (Original) The method according to Claim 9, wherein said third providing step further comprises providing users said option to receive said rating data recorded in said memory by receiving said aggregate post score for each post in said selected ones of said posts.

11.   (Original) The method according to Claim 10, wherein said third providing step   further comprises providing users said option to view said rating data by presenting to users said selected ones of said posts ranked according to said aggregate post score.

12.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the steps of associating said rating data recorded in said memory with at least one of said users according to at least one post provided by said at least one user to produce user-associated rating data.

13.   (Original) The method according to Claim 12, further comprising a step of ranking said users according to a value of said user-associated rating data associated with each said at least one user.

14.   (Original) The method according to Claim 13, wherein said ranking step further comprises developing an aggregate user score for each user, wherein each said aggregate user score contains information about said value of said user-associated rating data.

15.   (Original) The method according to Claim 14, further comprising the step of providing users an option to receive said aggregate user score for each user.

16.   (Currently amended)   The method according to Claim 1, further comprising defining said topic for said posts of information prior to said first receiving step.

17.   (Original)   The method according to Claim 16,   wherein said second providing step further comprises providing said users said option to individually rate each of said posts according to whether said each of said posts is relevant to said topic, and wherein said second receiving step further comprises receiving said rating data comprising information about the topical relevance of said selected ones of said posts.

18.   (Currently amended)   The method according to Claim 16, wherein said first providing step further comprises providing on a wide area network a Web page displaying at least one of said posts, providing said users an option to contribute at least one of said posts using said Web page, and providing on said Web page a plurality of links to a plurality of related Web pages containing information relevant to said topic, in addition to said posts.

19.   (Original) The method according to Claim 18, further comprising providing said users an option to rate each of said plurality of related Web pages linked to said Web page by said links.

20.   (Currently amended)   The method according to Claim 19, further comprising receiving link rating data pertaining to selected ones of said links from said users, wherein at least a portion of said link rating data comprises a quantitative rating ratings of comparative relevance of said selected ones of said links to said defined topic, and wherein said selected ones of said links comprises links to selected ones of said plurality of related Web pages that have been received and rated by said users.

21.   (Original) The method according to Claim 20, further comprising ranking said links according to said link rating data on said Web page.

22.   (Original)   The method according to Claim 20, further comprising presenting said links on a menu of said Web page.

23.   (Original)   The method according to Claim 22, further comprising presenting said links grouped in a plurality of menus of said Web page, wherein each of said plurality of menus contains links pertaining to a category, wherein said category is selected from top links and nominated links.

24.   (Original) The method according to Claim 22, wherein said links further comprise at least one link to at least one related Web page configured to display posts relevant to a second topic, wherein said second topic is related to said topic.

25.   (Original) The method according to Claim 24, further comprising providing said users an option to rate said at least one related Web page, and receiving link rating data pertaining to said at least one link from said users, wherein at least a portion of said link rating data comprises information about the relatedness of said second topic and said topic.

26.   (Currently amended) The method according to Claim 16, wherein said first providing step further comprises providing on a wide area network a Web page displaying at least one post of said posts, providing said users an option to contribute at least one of said posts using said Web page, and providing on said Web page a plurality of links to a plurality of related Web pages containing information relevant to said topic, in addition to said posts, wherein at least one of said plurality of related Web pages contains at least one link back to said Web page.

27.   (Original)   The method according the Claim 26, further comprising counting use of said at least one link back to said Web page to link to said Web page during a predetermined interval of time, and ranking said plurality of links according to said count.

28.   (Original)   The method according to Claim 27, further comprising performing an action selected from adding a link to said plurality of links, and deleting a link from said plurality of links, according to a ranking determined in said ranking step.

29.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising receiving preference information from at least one of said users, wherein said preference information specifies a threshold criteria for filtering said posts according to said rating data, and further comprising storing said preference information in said memory.

30.   (Original) The method according to Claim 29, further comprising filtering said posts to identify desired posts by rejecting posts that do not meet said threshold criteria specified by said preference information, providing a Web page to said at least one of said users on a wide area network, and displaying at least one post of said desired posts on said Web page.

31.   (Original)   The method according to Claim 30, wherein said step of providing a Web page further comprises providing a Web page having a tolerance bar for providing said at least one user an option to send said preference information for storing in said memory.

32.   (Original) The method according to Claim 12, further comprising receiving preference information from at least one of said users, wherein said preference information specifies a threshold criteria for filtering said posts according to said user-associated rating data applied to the contributor of each post of said posts, and further comprising storing said preference information in said memory.

33.   (Original) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising defining a plurality of topics for said posts of information, and storing said topics in said memory.

34.   (Original)   The method according to Claim 33, wherein said second receiving step further comprises receiving said rating data comprising information about the relevance of selected ones of said posts to selected ones of said plurality of topics, and grouping said posts in a plurality of topically organized self-evolving exchange groups according to said rating data, wherein each topically organized self-evolving exchange group comprises posts relevant to one of said plurality of topics.

35.   (Original)   The method according to Claim 1, wherein said steps are repeated in any logical order causing the number of said posts stored in said memory and the amount of said rating data stored in said memory to increase.

36.   (Original)   The method according to Claim 2, further comprising an initial step of receiving an address for a Web page from a founding user, and wherein said step of providing a Web page further comprises providing a link on said Web page, said link comprising said address from said founding user.

37 - 40.   (Canceled)

41.   (Currently amended)   A computer-implemented system for exchanging information within a group of users on a wide area network, comprising:

at least one processor connected to a wide area network;

a memory connected to said processor and having program instructions stored therein, said processor operable to execute said program instructions, said program instructions comprising:

receiving posts of information from users on said wide area network;

storing said posts in said memory;

providing said users an option to receive said posts;

providing said users an option to rate each of said posts in relation to a defined topic;

receiving rating data pertaining to selected ones of said posts from said users, wherein at least a portion of said rating data comprises a ~~quantitative rating~~ ratings of comparative relevance of said selected ones of said posts to said defined topic, said ratings determined by said users after reviewing said selected ones of said posts, ~~and wherein said selected ones of said posts comprises posts that have been received and individually rated by said users~~;

storing said rating data in said memory; and

providing said users ~~an option to receive~~ said rating data defining comparative relevance values associated with said selected ones of said posts equally for said users.

42.   (Original) The system according to Claim 41, wherein said instructions further comprise defining a plurality of topics for said posts of information, and wherein said instructions further comprise receiving said rating data comprising information about the relevance of selected ones of said posts to selected ones of said plurality of topics, and grouping said posts in a plurality of topically organized self-evolving exchange groups according to said rating data, wherein each topically organized self-evolving exchange group comprises posts relevant to one of said plurality of topics.

43.   (Currently amended)   A method for organizing a system of topically organized, self-evolving exchange groups, comprising:

defining a plurality of topics for posts of information from users on a wide area network;

storing said plurality of topics in a memory;

receiving said posts of information from said users;

storing said posts of information in a memory;

grouping said posts of information into topical groups, wherein each of said topical groups comprises selected ones of said posts of information pertaining to one of said plurality of topics;

providing said users an option to receive said topical groups;

providing said users an option to individually rate said posts in said topical groups in relation to topics defined for each topical group;

receiving rating data pertaining to selected ones of said posts from said users, wherein at a portion of said rating data comprises a quantitative rating ratings of comparative relevance of said selected ones of said posts to said topics defined for each topical group, said ratings determined by said users after reviewing said selected ones of said posts, and wherein said selected ones of said posts comprises posts that have been received and individually rated by said users;

storing said rating data in said memory; and

ranking said posts in said topical groups according to said rating data defining comparative relevance values associated with said selected ones of said posts equally for said users.

44.   (Currently amended) The method according to Claim 43, wherein said first providing step further comprises:

providing a Web page on a wide area network, said Web page displaying posts of a first topical group of said topical groups;

providing said users an option to contribute at least one of said posts using said Web page; and

providing on said Web page links to a plurality of Web pages containing information relevant to a topic of said first topical group, in addition to said posts.

45.   (Original) The method according to Claim 44, wherein selected ones of said links to said plurality of Web pages on said Web page of said first providing step further comprise links to a plurality of Web pages configured to display posts from selected ones of said topical groups, wherein said selected ones of said topical groups and said first topical group comprise posts relevant to a subject.

46.   (Original) The method according to Claim 44, further comprising providing said users an option to rate each of said plurality of Web pages linked to said Web page by said links.

47.   (Currently amended) The method according to Claim 44, further comprising receiving link rating data pertaining to selected ones of said links from said users, wherein at least a portion of said link rating data comprises a quantitative rating ratings of comparative relevance of said selected ones of said links to said defined topic, and wherein said selected ones of said links comprises links to selected ones of said plurality of Web pages that have been received and rated by said users.

48.   (Original) The method according to Claim 47, further comprising ranking said links according to said link rating data on said Web page.

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49. (Original) The method according to Claim 47, further comprising presenting said selected ones of said links on a menu of said Web page.